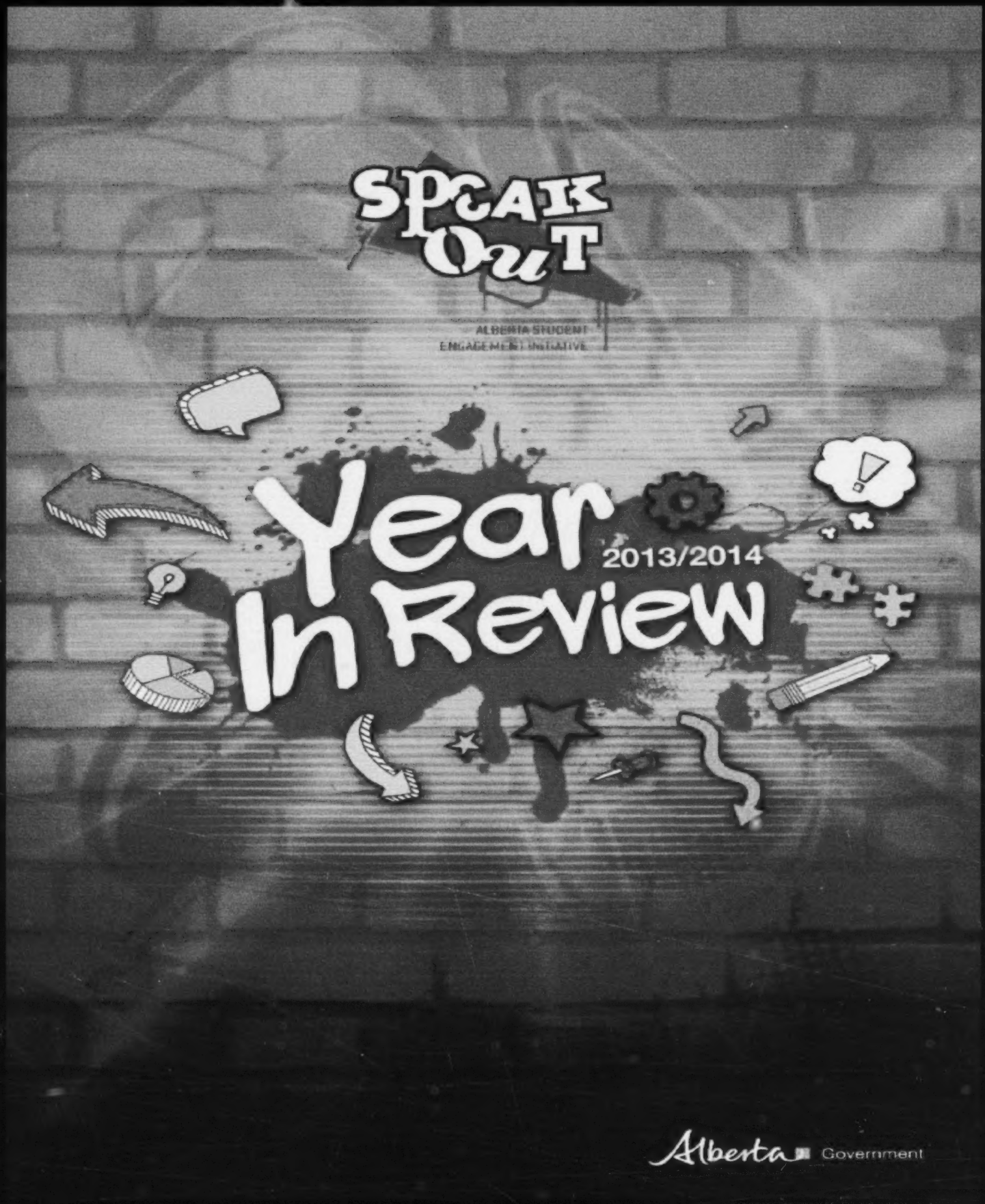
SPEAK OUT
ALBERTA STUDENT
ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE
Year In Review
2013/2014
Alberta Government

Disclaimer

The opinions in this publication are those of Alberta youth who have unique perspectives to share, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Alberta.

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Speak Out

Introduction

Alberta is moving toward a student-centred education system that emphasizes enabling and sponsoring every student's learning and achievement. Now, more than ever, student input can make a difference.

Through *Speak Out*, an Alberta Education initiative, students work alongside all education partners collaboratively to transform the education system and realize the vision of the educated Albertan as an engaged thinker, who is an ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit.

Student engagement is at the heart of student-centred learning. It is about:

- collaborating with students in an effort to enhance their interest in education and their passion for learning; and
- providing students with meaningful opportunities to be leaders of change in their schools and communities.

Speak Out provides students ages 14 to 19 from across Alberta with the tools they need to engage in discussions with each other and with key stakeholders regarding their education:

- An interactive website aimed at youth from across the province www.speakout.alberta.ca.
- *Speak Out* Forums, which are student-led focus group discussions held at Alberta schools. These forums encourage students to share their voice on key education issues with school staff that can lead to enhancing their learning experiences.
- The Annual *Speak Out* Conference, where youth from across the province come together every spring to contribute to current and future initiatives with Alberta Education.
- Minister's Student Advisory Council, whose mandate is to collect and represent the student voice to inform and influence the ministry and the educational community. The council explores new and innovative ways to improve the learning experiences of young Albertans.

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Speak Out Summary

The Alberta Student Engagement Initiative, *Speak Out*, was created in 2008 to support Alberta youth in sharing education ideas and experiences with each other and the ministry. Alberta Education sees student engagement as a process of active collaboration with students in an effort to best support their needs, goals and learning preferences.

Student engagement in Alberta advances the way Alberta Education conducts its business of teaching and learning. Various branches within the department, other ministries, school jurisdictions, teachers, parents and others from the education community are increasingly recognizing the positive impacts of student engagement.

Speak Out is dedicated to providing students with meaningful opportunities to create positive change in their schools and communities. The stories in this document reflect these opportunities and strongly align with the vision of *Inspiring Education*. This vision is about shifting our focus, expanding traditional methods of teaching, and giving educators licence to be more creative. At the heart of the vision is one thing: students.

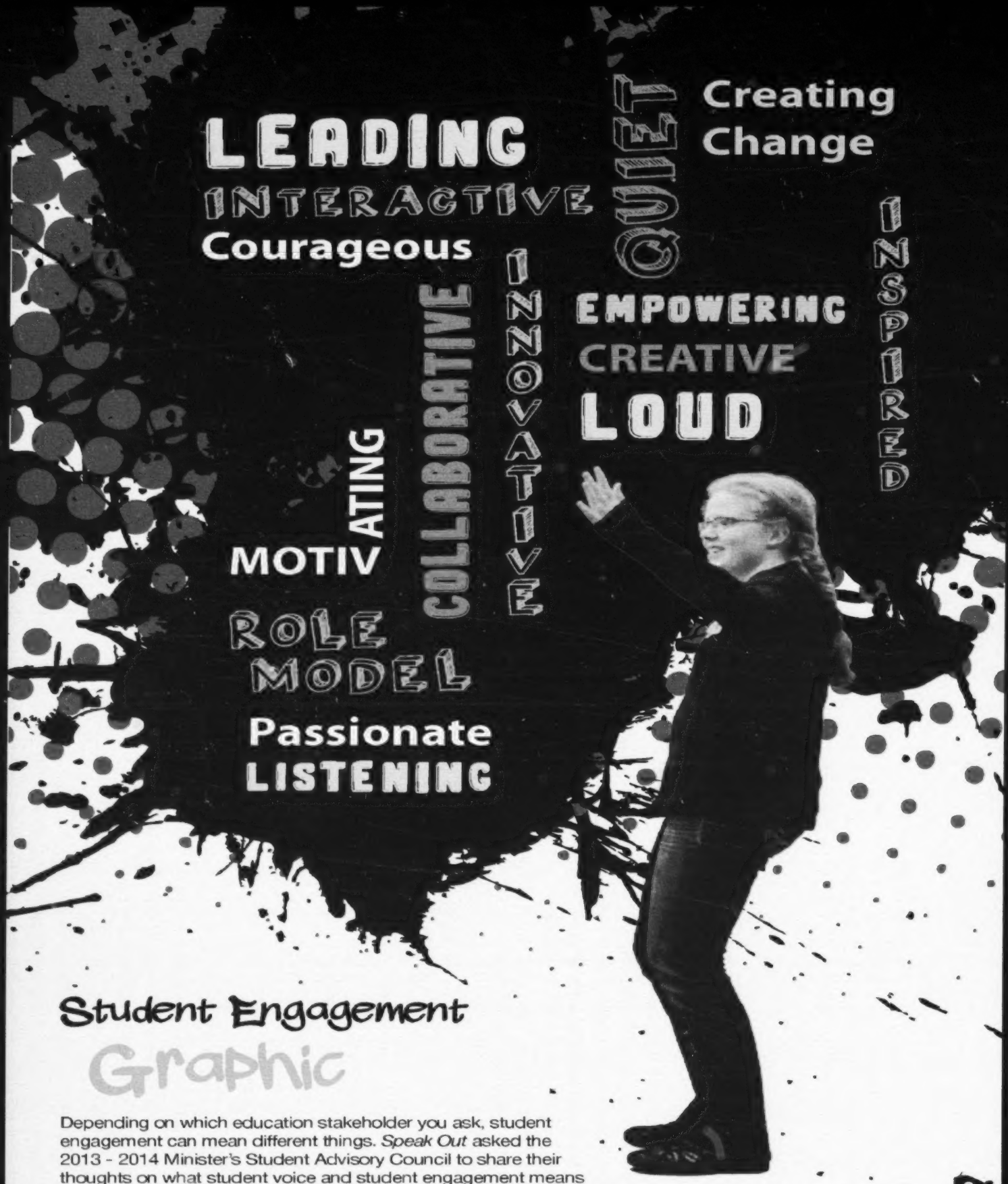
We encourage you to read about how Lily and Andrew, both members of the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC), brought their student voice to the *Inspiring Education* Symposium; how Rami was selected to attend the China Bridge Summer Camp as a student leader representing Alberta Education; how the *Speak Out* Conference Leaders of Change panel that included Brad Vonkeman, President of the Alberta School Councils Association along with the Deputy Minister of Education, Greg Bass, encouraged youth in the audience to inspire, challenge and work in partnership with adults to create change; and how Heather, a MSAC alumna shares how *Speak Out* not only opened doors for her, but changed the person that she is today.

We hope you enjoy the 2013 - 2014 Year in Review; *Speak Out's* success is Alberta's success. *Speak Out* has provided thousands of Alberta students with a place to share their thoughts and perspectives about their education, opportunity to connect with other students and learn more about the education system in Alberta. We are proud to share some of our achievements with you and to express our appreciation for the support from our government, education and community partners, who are all dedicated to ensuring each student has every chance to reach his or her full potential.

Speak Out continues to evolve from its current structure and mandate, to a new vision that will provide a greater outreach to students within the educational community, enabling students to work alongside all education partners within a collaborative structure, transforming the education system and realizing the vision of *Inspiring Education* for the Albertan of 2030. Stay up to date on the latest *Speak Out* news through our website and your school jurisdiction.

The Speak Out Team

This report shows all quotations from participants' contributions to *Speak Out* as originally written, with no changes to spelling, grammar or punctuation.



Student Engagement Graphic

Depending on which education stakeholder you ask, student engagement can mean different things. *Speak Out* asked the 2013 - 2014 Minister's Student Advisory Council to share their thoughts on what student voice and student engagement means to them. Here's a snapshot of what the Council had to say.

"Just like how *Speak Out* listens to the voices of students in Alberta, I believe that there should be different opportunities in schools where they can express their opinions in making their school community better." – Survey participant

Speak Out Online

The *Speak Out* interactive website www.speakout.alberta.ca is a place where youth share thoughts and opinions with their peers, Alberta Education and the educational community. The website includes videos, fully moderated discussion blogs, as well as information on *Speak Out* forums, the Annual *Speak Out* Conference and the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC).

This public website contains thousands of student-generated comments and posts. Students are invited to talk about education, from teaching and learning styles, to curriculum, technology, and their desire to improve how education looks and feels for them. At the beginning of the school year, the website was used to seek information and feedback on our program. A few highlights from the online discussions and the survey involved students:

- appreciating the opportunity to engage with *Speak Out* online using the website, Twitter and Facebook,
- feeling that *Speak Out* offers a good platform for providing input on the education system, and
- seeking information from the *Speak Out* website, but also relying on their schools to share information and updates.

Speak Out Facebook has been providing a platform for the MSAC to discuss ideas, network, build collegiality, and keep in contact between meetings. The Twitter account @SpeakoutAB promotes student blogs, shares forum results, advertises for partners of youth focused initiatives, and promotes MSAC activities.

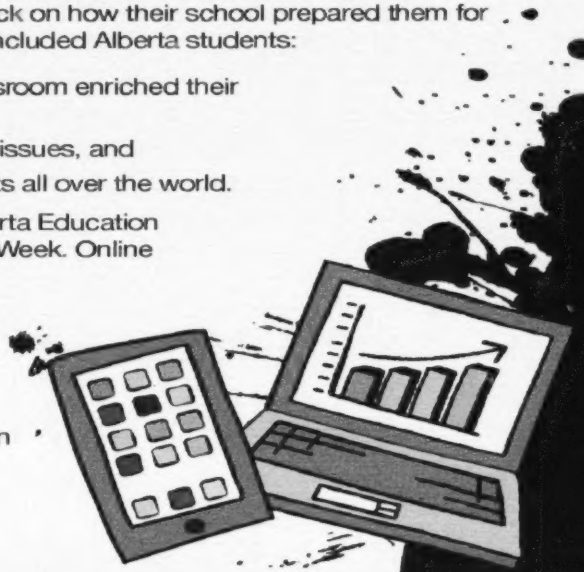
Student voice has been essential to informing the development of initiatives and policies within Alberta Education, with various education stakeholders and with other ministries across the Government of Alberta. *Speak Out* works with these program areas to create poll questions, discussion board questions and monthly surveys. The website partners receive reports of the data collected from students who participated on the website.

For example, the International Education Branch of Alberta Education partnered with *Speak Out* to share information on opportunities for students to study abroad, and seek input on aspects of the International Education program. Students were asked to reflect on international education, consider if they were interested in participating in the program, and to provide feedback on how their school prepared them for interactions with other cultures. Online and survey discussions included Alberta students:

- feeling that having students from another country in their classroom enriched their learning experience,
- wanting to increase their knowledge and awareness of global issues, and
- having the opportunity to connect with and learn from students all over the world.

School and Community Supports for Children and Youth of Alberta Education worked with *Speak Out* to discuss National Bullying Awareness Week. Online discussions and the survey feedback consisted of:

- a supportive and inclusive school environment and respectful interactions with school staff help students feel safe,
- an active peer support group can help students deal with difficult situations, and
- students wanting access to more resources, both online and in person, on how to address bullying.



The Blogs

The Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC) wrote discussion blogs every month to share their ideas with students and to seek input on a variety of topics. The Council members worked closely with the *Speak Out* Team to develop their blogs on subjects that were of interest to them, or to share information on activities that they had participated in as a member of the Council.

Throughout the year MSAC blogs reflected on and discussed topics that were impacting their educational experience. A wide range of topics were covered including adjusting to a new high school, leadership, stress and depression, homework, mentorship, extracurricular activities, peer pressure, bullying, and classroom technology. All *Speak Out* blogs are on the *Speak Out* website at www.speakout.alberta.ca/BLOG. The following are some of the excerpts from blogs written by Council members:

On Teaching Excellence

Arnie E.

+ To me an excellent teacher is one who takes the time to make sure that their students are doing the best that they can be doing, a teacher who actually cares about their jobs and the students they are teaching.

On Homework

Elanta A.

+ So my question for all of you, is even though we know we don't like homework, does it help you at all? Maybe you learn better on your own, and by trying to figure things out, or is it simply too much stress and impede your ability to have 'a life'. Even though we can see some science is saying homework doesn't help, school kids have been getting it since school started. Something has to be right if a tradition has lasted this long. Or is it just that, it's a tradition that needs to be rethought.

Scoring a Touchdown on a Different Field

Breanne H.

+ In our vast and growing province there are many schools with many students. Each one of those students has a passion. That passion could be homelessness, endangered animals, cure for cancer, you name it! I see so much giving in my community at Christmas time, but what about the other 11 months? Aren't passions still in need of being fulfilled?

There are so many different ways that students can get involved, imagine getting involved has the same roles as a football game. There is your quarterback, your main lead; either your school leadership or student council. You have your defensive players that are working against you but are really just unmotivated and possibly uneducated on your cause or passion. Cheerleaders, fans, and offensive players are all working alongside with the quarterback.

Inspiring Education is encouraging students to become agents of change in their school and community. So what's your role? Are you leading an event towards change, than you're the quarterback! Are you supporting your friend or school leadership towards a local cause? Then you would be the role of a fan, cheerleader, or offensive player. If you aren't sure of what you can do to create change in your school or are unaware of the causes your school is passionate about then you would be the defensive player. If you think you are a defensive player then find out how you can get involved or meet with your school principal to share your passion to get your school's support.

It doesn't matter if you're a quarterback or a fan when it comes to creating change. Any role you play, you and your school will be scoring a touchdown by helping local, provincial, federal, or international causes. What I want to know is, how is your school scoring touchdowns to help causes you care about? What position do you play? How are you acting as an agent of change in your school and community?

On Mentoring
Maria B.

+ Maybe it's their total abandon of image.
Maybe it's the way they come out of their shell sooner or later. But I can promise that being a mentor is unforgettable, and that I'll be back next time.

A Fresh Perspective
Council

+ Ever feel as if your ideas aren't important? Well, they are. An issue to get students engaged is to understand their ideas and to listen.

Instead of running a hierarchy of teacher and student, we should be more concerned about hearing every student. Every student, every age, every different grade and intelligence, has something to offer. We should be concerned about hearing what our educators have to offer us and collaborate into a more cohesive future of education.

Your ideas are important. Your ideas are worth listening to. So why aren't they always listened to?

Sometimes there are barriers; a major one could be school tradition and structure. I look forward to meeting with my school and cooperate with them to make our school a place of student involvement and engagement in all grades and in every classroom.

What about your school? How could you cooperate with your school to bring your ideas into the picture? How can you engage other students to share their ideas?

On Bullying
Taylor P.

+ your memory of our times together
and my memories
are two separate planets.
you don't remember the games you pushed me out of
but i do.
you don't remember the names and taunts
but i do.
you don't remember the tears that flooded my vision
but i do.
you don't remember the pressure at my throat
pulling me into the darkness
but i do.
you don't remember the cold burning my face,
as you pushed me into the snow.
but i do.
you don't remember the blackness seeping in at the edges of my vision.
but i do.
you don't live with the fear of being touched, being hurt again
but i do.
you don't live with the fear of words
but i do.
you don't live with the left over fear
but i do.
you never felt someone trying to pull your life away
but i did.
you never felt like an alien, unable to connect to the other children.
but i did.
you never spent recess alone, hiding from anyone who could hurt you
but I did.
you were never told to kill yourself, and you never believed it.
but i did.

you tried to make me a statistic.
but i refuse.
you left me scarred emotionally.
but i refuse.
you did something that should have broken me.
but i refuse. I am stronger than that.
I remember.
I will always remember.
I will never forget.
And that is what makes me strong.
That is what lets me know I am better than the words,
better than anything you try to throw at me.
I will no longer give you that power over me.
You are my past.
You are not my future.
You tried to break me.
You failed.
You are a bully.
I am strong.

Chinese Bridge Summer Camp

In July 2013, the Council of Chinese Language International (Hanban), Alberta Education and Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations collaborated to implement a Student Summer Camp in China. China extended an invitation to Alberta students, helping to promote exchanges between the youth of Alberta and the youth of China. The focus of the camp was to enhance the understanding of Alberta students of Chinese language and culture, and build up their global view and their interest in Chinese language, culture and society.

The summer camp pilot was a unique opportunity to support student learning within a global context, and was made available only to Alberta students because of the strong collaborative relationship between Alberta Education and China.

Alberta students from across the province were invited to submit a written application with final selections made by committee. The summer camp provided 18 Alberta youth with the opportunity to participate, two of which were members of the Minister's Student Advisory Council. These two Council members acted as student leaders throughout the trip.

Rami's Story

I was selected to attend the China Bridge Summer Camp 2013 as a Student Leader representing the Ministry of Education and *Speak Out*. Alongside me was Aaron, also a member of the Minister's Student Advisory Council, who aided as a Student Leader during the length of the trip. We also had Julie Carter with us as Chaperone, who works with the *Speak Out* Initiative.

I had the honour of giving the opening speeches in both Beijing and Harbin, China to welcome students and facilitators to the start of a wonderful opportunity. The organization that invited us to China, Hanban (Confucius Institute Headquarters), was outstanding in delivering great performances, amazing tour guides, and wonderful hospitality, making our stay as perfect as could be.

We had the fantastic opportunity to engage in different sightseeing opportunities – such as trekking the greatest world wonder, the Great Wall of China, as well as touring the glorious Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, Summer Palace, as well as taking a walk through the 2008 Beijing Olympic Park, which housed the Olympic Bird's Nest.

We also engaged in several different cultural activities, such as visiting different museums in the cities of Beijing, Harbin, and Acheng to learn more about the deep history of China. While in Harbin, we participated in different activities with the whole group such as Tai Chi, paper cutting, Chinese calligraphy, and learning Chinese Mandarin. Ni hao, renshi ni hen gaoxing!

"In all, it was an amazing and delightful experience in which taught me more about the cultural history of China, more about skills and use of language, as well as meeting an abundance of amazing people whom I shared some great experiences with." - Rami

Speak Out Forums

Speak Out forums provide students from all over Alberta the opportunity to reflect on their educational experience, provide feedback and become leaders of change in their schools and communities. These forums encourage participation from all students.

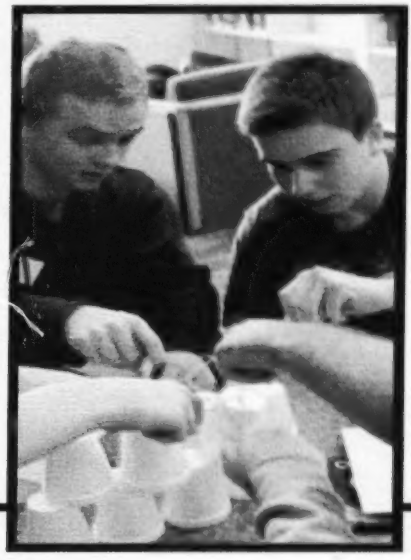
Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014, *Speak Out* heard from 1,010 students in 17 school authorities, hosting 35 forums using the DVD toolkit or a similar, in-person forum process. An Alberta accredited school in Bermuda also hosted a forum using the DVD toolkit.

The toolkit is designed to ensure that anyone, anywhere and at any time can host a forum to find out what students think about their education. During *Speak Out* forums, students participate in team building games, discuss leadership skills, and the importance of engagement in their school and community. The toolkit asks four questions that are designed to find out what's working, what's not, and what students want to do about it:

- What does it look like when you are learning at your best?
- What is holding you back from learning at your best?
- What actions can adults take to improve how education looks and feels?
- What actions can students take to improve how education looks and feels?

At the end of each *Speak Out* forum, the data is summarized into a five-page "What We Heard" report. This report provides the data collected at the forum back to all forum participants, the school administration and district administration, with the intent that the conversation will continue and will develop into action to improve how education looks and feels for everyone involved. Reports are also posted on the *Speak Out* website at www.speakout.alberta.ca/FORUM.

Speak Out forums continue to be a platform for students to have their voices heard by key decision and policy makers. By continuing to seek out the student voice, Alberta Education and all education partners are better able to understand and support student needs, goals and learning preference. The *Speak Out* forums create an amazing opportunity to encourage the development of an education system in which every student is an engaged thinker and ethical citizen with an entrepreneurial spirit.



Where We Were

A total of 35 *Speak Out* forums were held between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014. Below is a listing of the locations:

- Airdrie (2)
- Athabasca (1)
- Beaverlodge (1)
- Brooks (1)
- Calgary (6)
- Camrose (1)
- Coaldale (1)
- Cochrane (1)
- Edmonton (6)
- Fort McMurray (3)
- Morinville (1)
- Peace River (1)
- Pincher Creek (1)
- Sherwood Park (1)
- St. Albert (4)
- Vegreville (2)
- Wembley (1)
- Bermuda (1)

What Happened

To find out what really happens inside a *Speak Out* forum, *Speak Out* had the opportunity to chat with Andrew M. of the 2013 - 2014 Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC). Andrew hosted two forums this year, at two different schools.

Speak Out: Lead me through the steps of the forum? What happens inside a forum?

Andrew: I started the forum by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. I introduced who I was and what the MSAC is. Then I started the *Speak Out* DVD from the DVD toolkit to introduce the *Speak Out* initiative and what it does. The student participants start to get excited about sharing their voice and giving their perspective.

The DVD toolkit takes you through the process of asking four questions, as well as includes table games throughout. The table games get the people in the groups to feel more comfortable, get excited and get in the mood.

After the first game, we moved into the first question. Everyone has time to reflect by themselves on the question, and then they shared thoughts with their table. The table leader then works with the table to take the top two ideas, and then the group as a whole votes on them. We do this same thing for all of the questions.

What's neat about the forum itself is that even though the four questions are general, we go into specific depth of each. It represents the diverse ideas and perspective about our own school community.

Speak Out: What was your favourite part of the forum? What was your least favourite part?

Andrew: I really liked the games to ease the mood and create excitement. The hardest part of the forum process was waiting for the date of my forum. I had it postponed a few times because of events going on in the school. The forum itself is a great way for students to get involved in their education and speak out their voices.

Speak Out: What is being done with the information gathered from the forum?

Andrew: My junior high school looked at the report together as most of the table leaders were on the student council. The What We Heard report is stuff kids pointed out at the forum, and the students were going to bring these results up to the principal. They wanted to use the forum results to say this is the stuff to work on to better their education within the school community.

Speak Out: How has it been in your school since the forum? What's changed? Do you see a change in the students who participated?

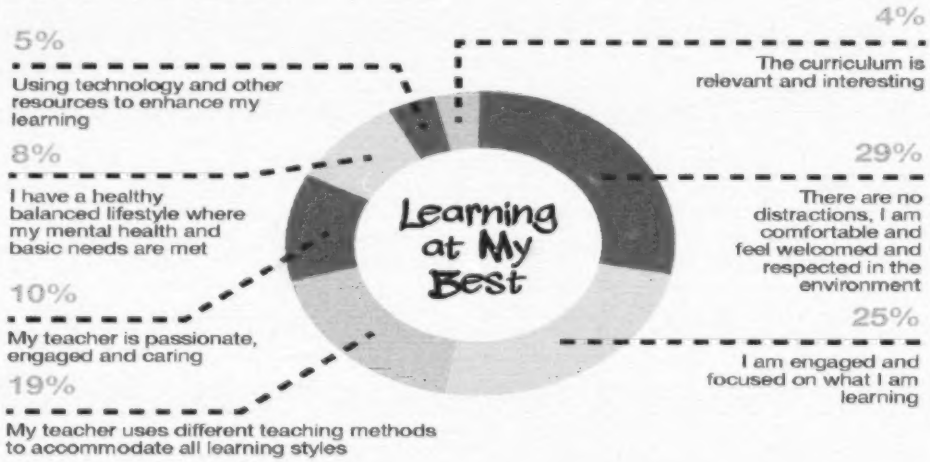
Andrew: I think they have more interest in student voice. Since the forum, students have realized how a *Speak Out* forum can make a difference in their school community. Part of getting informed is introducing *Speak Out* to them and trying to get them interested in it, and in sharing their voice.

What We Heard

The following diagrams and tables summarize the top student responses to the questions asked during each of the 35 *Speak Out* forums. The diagrams identify general themes, including the percentage of student votes each response received.

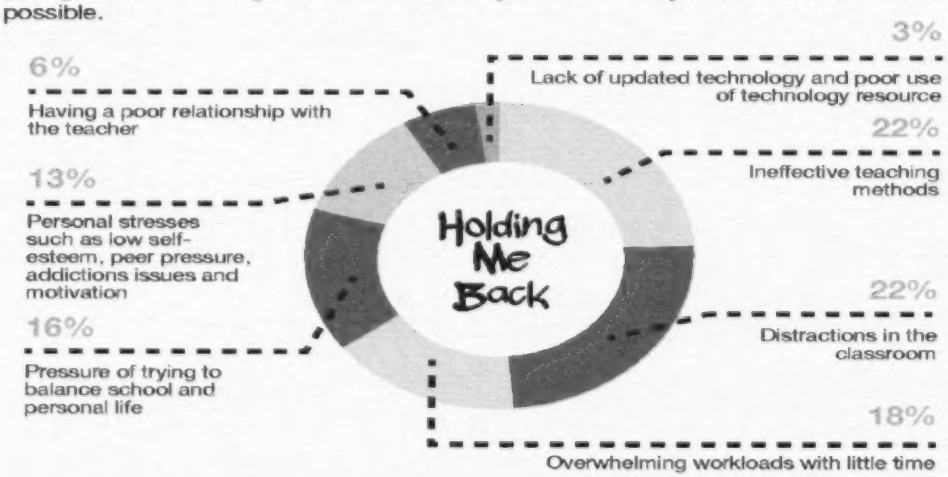
Question One: What does it look like when you are learning at your best?

The purpose of this question was to find out what each student's ideal learning experience looked like. Students were asked to think about the "who, what, where, when, why and how of learning" to brainstorm as many ideas as they could.


Learning at My Best
5%
Using technology and other resources to enhance my learning
8%
I have a healthy balanced lifestyle where my mental health and basic needs are met
10%
My teacher is passionate, engaged and caring
19%
My teacher uses different teaching methods to accommodate all learning styles
4%
The curriculum is relevant and interesting
29%
There are no distractions, I am comfortable and feel welcomed and respected in the environment
25%
I am engaged and focused on what I am learning

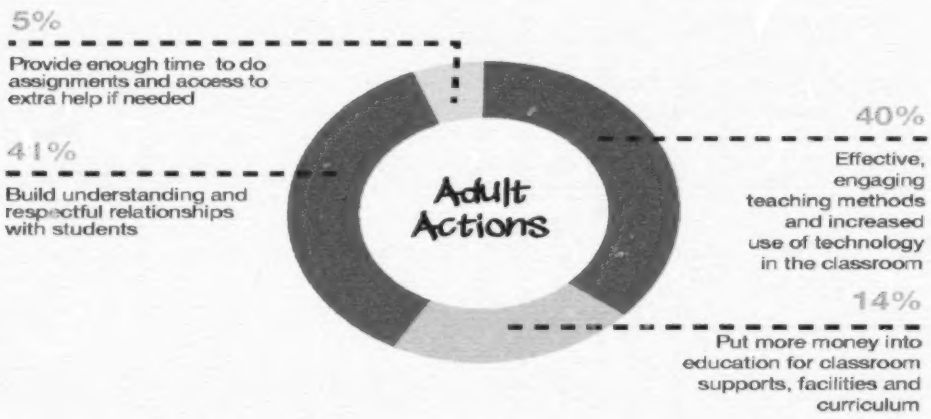
Question Two: What is holding you back from learning at your best?

The purpose of this question was to find out what it was that students did not like about school or what was preventing them from being the best student they could be. They were asked to brainstorm as many ideas as possible.


Holding Me Back
6%
Having a poor relationship with the teacher
13%
Personal stresses such as low self-esteem, peer pressure, addictions issues and motivation
16%
Pressure of trying to balance school and personal life
3%
Lack of updated technology and poor use of technology resource
22%
Ineffective teaching methods
22%
Distractions in the classroom
18%
Overwhelming workloads with little time

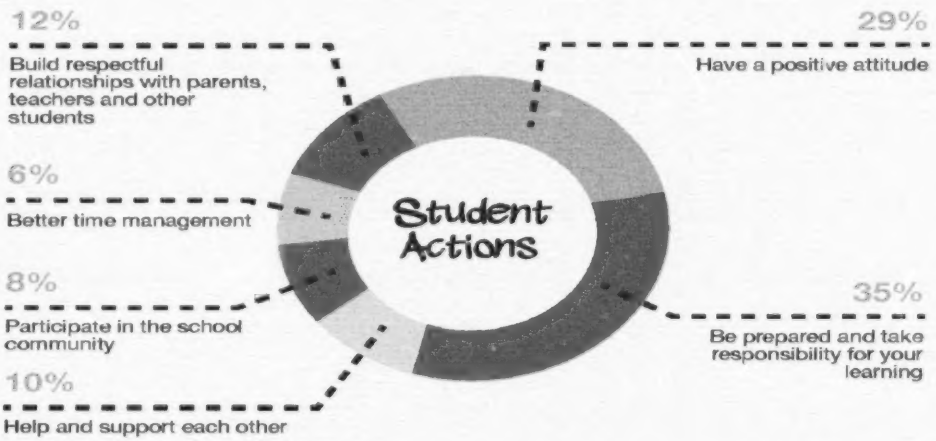
Question Three: What actions can adults take to improve how education looks and feels?

The purpose of this question was to have students suggest ways that adults could improve their learning and education experience. They were asked to think about their answers to **Question Two** (What is holding you back from learning at your best?) and provide solutions that adults could offer. The students were asked to provide as many solutions as possible.


5%
Provide enough time to do assignments and access to extra help if needed
41%
Build understanding and respectful relationships with students
Adult Actions
40%
Effective, engaging teaching methods and increased use of technology in the classroom
14%
Put more money into education for classroom supports, facilities and curriculum

Question Four: What actions can students take to improve how education looks and feels?

The *Speak Out* team always feels that this is the most important question we can ask students. The purpose of this question is to get students thinking about what they can do to improve their education experience. It is the question that starts them on the road to engage in their learning, overcoming the roadblocks they identified as holding them back and motivate them to achieving the bright, shiny ideal of **Question One** (What does it look like when you are learning at your best?).



The *Speak Out* team understands the importance of being open and transparent in this process. Within days of delivering each *Speak Out* forum, the student-generated data was transcribed into a What We Heard report and posted on the *Speak Out* website. The report was also sent to the forum host, all forum participants, the school administration and the district administration.

"It was nice to learn what other students thought, what was different or the same as mine." - Forum Participant

Reports are also posted on the *Speak Out* website at www.speakout.alberta.ca/FORUM.

Kaeleigh's Story

My high school journey has been an amazing experience of personal growth, and opportunities to succeed. Being in twelfth grade in a small rural town, I believe my story shows the triumphs of working outside limitations and the true value of engagement resources such as *Speak Out*.

Being from a school of less than 400 students Kindergarten to Grade 12, our school maintained the basic extra-curricular of sports and Students' Union, but did not have many other opportunities for students to engage. Personally, I wasn't interested in playing sports so I began to take interest in Students' Union and spent the year of tenth grade playing many vital roles in planning events and hosting Students' Union meetings, filling the roles of Secretary, Treasurer, and Social Convener. It was also my tenth grade year that I became acquainted with *Speak Out*.

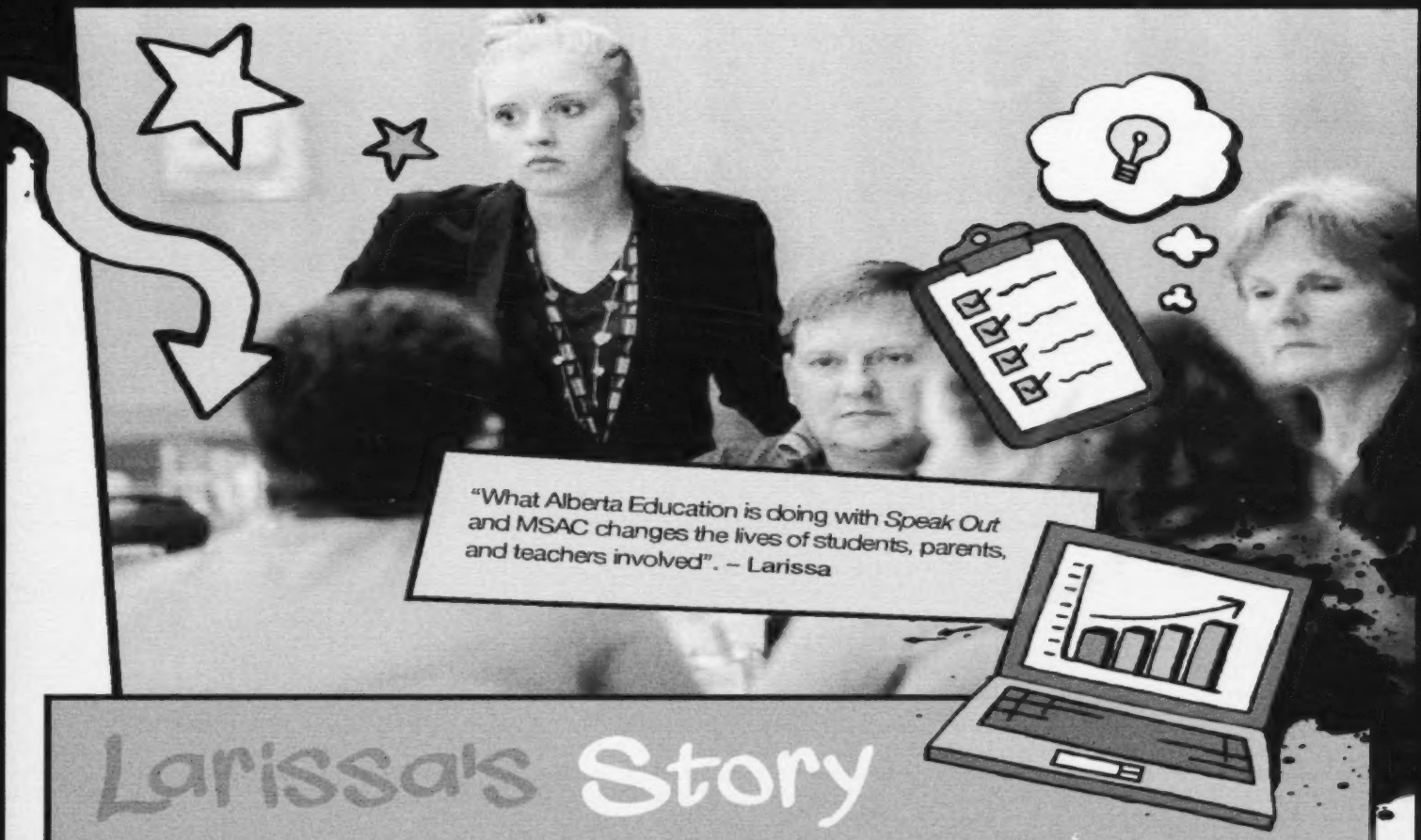
I attended the *Speak Out* Conference in April of 2012, and left feeling so empowered and engaged that I returned to my school to host a *Speak Out* forum before the end of the school year. In the following school year 2012 - 2013, I formed a Student Engagement Team to work on a follow-up project from our forum results, and we decided to host enough forums to encompass the voice of all students in grades 7-12. Three forums later, every student had the opportunity to participate and we were ready to act. What better way to move forward than to participate in a Taking Action Pilot Project with *Speak Out*?

The Student Engagement Team took our work to the next level by joining a Community Engagement Team as the student liaisons and advocates, brainstorming ideas for an action project, and hosting a live texting assembly to collect even more feedback. We formed an idea on the basis of our forum results and proposed it to the *Speak Out* team. With a few changes and adjustments along the road, the team is now working with funding provided by *Speak Out* in partnership with the Community Engagement Team to allow students more opportunities to engage with the community and experience a more unique and personalized education that may prove valuable to forming their future aspirations and plans. The community group along with our group of students has already hosted a very successful interactive career fair and is in the process of implementing other grade-specific initiatives to engage students in the community and in planning their future.

Not only has *Speak Out* empowered me with the resources and motivation to evoke and promote change in my community, *Speak Out* has improved me as a student, a community member, and a leader. *Speak Out* has taught me the value of education, and how fortunate I am to have influence on my own education. It has taught me how to work for the benefit of others, and to think outside the box. With *Speak Out*, there was no limitation to the changes I was able to make within my school. Personally, *Speak Out* has taught me the most invaluable lessons of leadership and what it means to lead. My role with *Speak Out* within my school allowed the shyest students and those who thought their voice was insignificant to not only participate, but to lead with me, ultimately allowing some of those students to begin speaking at assemblies, pitching action plans at staff meetings, and speaking at division-wide conferences about our group's successes.

I cannot begin to thank the *Speak Out* team and the tool that is *Speak Out* enough for the power they have given me within my school, education and community. I have learned what it means to advocate and lead, and because of *Speak Out:* The Student Engagement Initiative, I vow to always speak out.

In 2012 - 2013, the *Speak Out* Taking Action pilot project began. Four schools participated in this pilot project, which offered students the opportunity to pick an issue that came up in their forum and create an action plan to address it. Students were able to carry out local projects to make a difference in their own schools and communities.



"What Alberta Education is doing with *Speak Out* and MSAC changes the lives of students, parents, and teachers involved". – Larissa

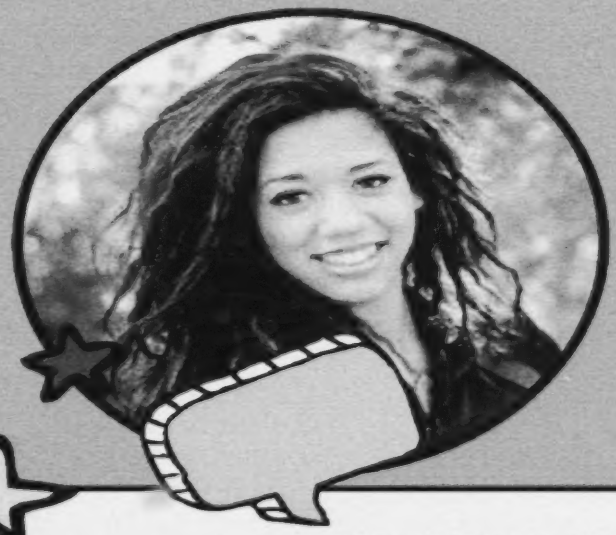
Larissa's Story

My involvement with *Speak Out* has truly defined my high school and university experience! Being a member and alumna of the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC), I have organized and attended two Annual *Speak Out* Conferences. I feel I have a good understanding of how much work goes into this full-weekend event, and how valuable the experience can be for the people who take what is realized at the *Speak Out* Conference and apply it.

I like to think I am a student who embraces the knowledge and resources acquired through *Speak Out* and MSAC. What I learned and who I met when I helped organize the Global Education *Speak Out* session in 2012 played a crucial role in the academic path I would pursue in university, and in my selection to participate in the Summer Camp in China 2011, where 20 Alberta students travelled to Beijing and Harbin for two weeks. The benefits of my involvement with *Speak Out* didn't stop that summer, and followed me all the way to Toronto at York University.

Speak Out enhanced my application for scholarships I received such as the National Amazing Travel Scholarship and the Provincial Loran Scholarship. Organizing the conference and taking part in MSAC allowed me to develop skills and council experience that aided me in achieving Director of Leadership and Learning Opportunities for my residence building in my first year. During my employment this position paid my residence fees entirely. With the price of post-secondary tuition and Toronto living expenses, I don't need to explain how life-changing scholarships and employment are!

What Alberta Education is doing with *Speak Out* and MSAC changes the lives of students, parents, and teachers involved. I can speak on behalf of my own experiences, and that of many of my peers, that *Speak Out* offers endless opportunities beyond the four days of conference for professional networking, life-long friendship, and future opportunities.



Sixth Annual Speak Out CONFERENCE

Youth ages 14 to 19 came together in Edmonton from every corner of the province, for the sixth Annual *Speak Out* Conference "Inspiring Leaders of Change". This unique three-day event from April 11 to 13, 2014, offered delegates and their chaperones chances to network and build relationships with others, share their stories, inspire and learn from one another, and build their capacity as leaders of change in their school communities.

Delegates participating in the Conference acquired a better understanding of how to develop relationships with education partners, have input on their learning, and provide meaningful feedback for Alberta Education's priority initiatives. Highlights from the weekend's wide-ranging program included:

- Elder Bob Cardinal gave a traditional Aboriginal blessing before dinner,
- MLA Matt Jeneroux, Youth Secretariat Chair delivered the opening remarks,
- Nimra D. and Daniel C. were *Speak Out* Essay Contest winners,
- a fun evening of leadership and team building games with the Student Engagement Olympics, and
- Deputy Minister of Education Greg Bass, gave closing remarks, expressing the need for continued student involvement, in helping to make Alberta's education system the best in the world.

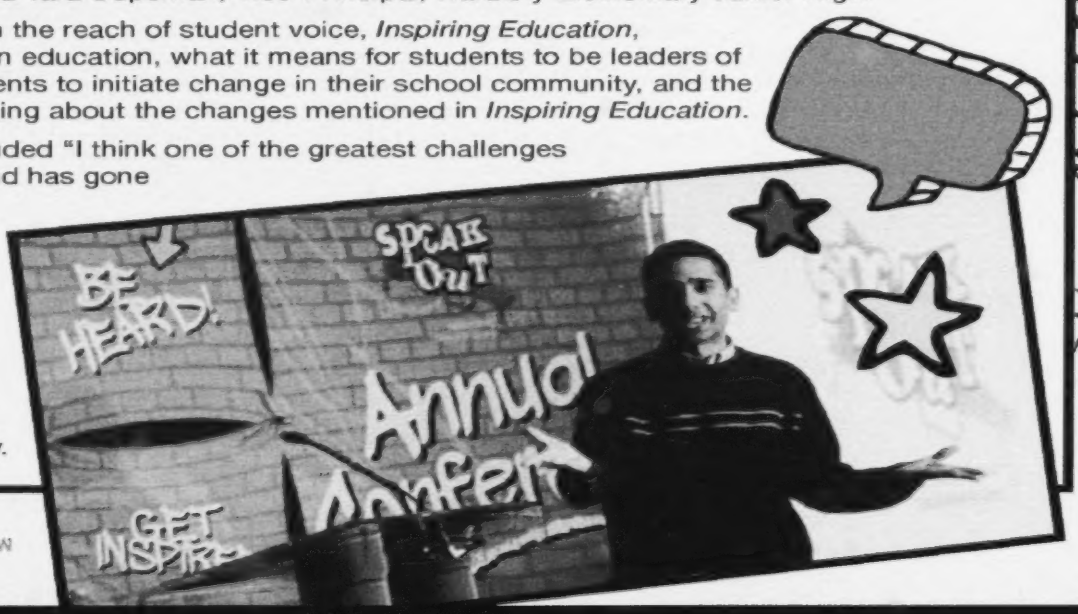
This year, the Conference hosted two amazing keynote speakers. On Friday night, conference delegates heard from Sunjay Nath who delighted the audience with his combination of humor and ability to inspire and motivate students and adults alike. Sunjay inspired the audience to "Lose the Chife and Choose Life" in his story about Rindercella and her Fugly Sepstisters. He captivated the audience with stories about his life and a raucous round of "Simon Says" where students were encouraged to "stand up when others are sitting". Both of these stories focused on thinking outside the box, changing obstacles into opportunities, and making decisions that are right for the individual.

On Saturday morning, Ahmed Ali encouraged the audience to find their voices. Ahmed used stories of his life to excite students to be the change they want to see. Ahmed finished his session with his inspiring spoken word poetry leaving the audience laughing and mesmerized by his talent.

Two members of the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC) developed and hosted the "Inspiring Leaders of Change" plenary session on the Sunday morning. The panel consisted of Kaeleigh Pasula, student; Brad Vonkeman, President, Alberta School Councils Association; Laura Andreas, Provincial Director, Alberta School Councils Association; Michael Janz, Board Trustee, Edmonton Public Schools; Karl Germann, Chief Superintendent, Grande Prairie Catholic School Division; Shauna Paul, Principal, Westbrook Elementary School, Deputy Minister Greg Bass, Alberta Education; and Tara Copeman, Vice-Principal, Hardisty Elementary Junior High.

Questions focused on the reach of student voice, *Inspiring Education*, student involvement in education, what it means for students to be leaders of change, helping students to initiate change in their school community, and the student's role in bringing about the changes mentioned in *Inspiring Education*.

Panel responses included "I think one of the greatest challenges that has happened and has gone out is a lot of misinformation, a lot of misunderstanding. We have pockets within the system where there are some challenges and that needs to be addressed, absolutely.

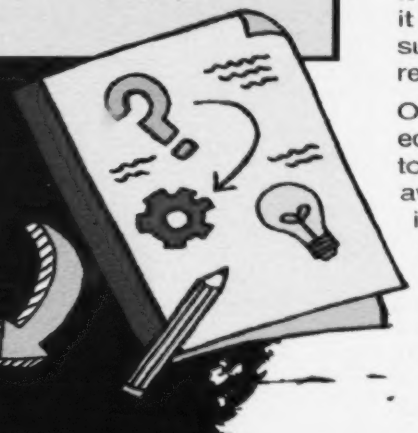


I would encourage each one to find out ALL of the info, not just some of it." ~ President Brad Vonkeman. "*Inspiring Education* is really exciting because it allows us to look towards our relationships with our students as a partnership. I encourage all of you to take on that role seriously and work alongside your teachers and TEACH us. I look towards my students for direction often, for encouragement and ideas of what we should be doing next." ~ Principal Shauna Paul. "*Inspiring Education* gives us the permission to have the conversations about all of the structural barriers we have in education ... so please, speak up, be the champions, bring your voice to the table, talk about the way in which you learn ... the different types of changes that are really resonating for you. That's how *Inspiring Education* will live and breathe across this province. Not from the Ministry, not from school divisions, but by students in classrooms in every community across Alberta." ~ Alberta Education Deputy Minister Greg Bass.

Who Attended?

A total of 260 students and 91 chaperones attended the Conference from 56 communities around Alberta. The Conference had participation by 43 Alberta Education staff and education community partners.

- Airdrie
- Alhambra
- Beaverlodge
- Berwyn
- Blairmore
- Bowden
- Brooks
- Bruderheim
- Calgary
- Calmar
- Camrose
- Chestermere
- Coleman
- Condor
- Coutts
- Crossfield
- Crowsnest Pass
- Dixonville
- Drayton Valley
- Eckville
- Edmonton
- Edson
- Enchant
- Entwhistle
- Fort Chipewyan
- Fort Saskatchewan
- Fox Creek
- Grassy Lake
- Grimshaw
- High Level
- Hillcrest Mines
- Hotchkiss
- Innisfree
- Leduc
- Leslieville
- Milk River
- Morinville
- Okotoks
- Olds
- Peace River
- Pincher Creek
- Red Deer
- Rimbey
- Rocky Mountain House
- Slave Lake
- Spruce Grove
- St. Albert
- St. Paul
- Stony Plain
- Sturgeon County
- Tilley
- Tsuu Tina
- Valleyview
- Vauxhall
- Wembley
- Yellowhead County



Nicole's Story

My favourite keynote speaker was Sunjay Nath; he spoke on the importance of taking control over your situation and creating your own destiny. This lesson truly resonated with me and others simply because the changes we hope to implement in our education system will not take place until after we leave high school. Therefore his message really encouraged the realization that life is essentially what we make it through our own decision-making. Yes, it may be affected and influenced by our surroundings but the final outcome is our responsibility.

Overall from the conference I learned that education sparks passion. If we want to create schools in which students are aware, engaged and passionate, we must involve them in the decision-making since students are impacted most of all. Once we begin talking with them, rather than at them, we create an innovative and encouraging environment.

Rami and Mikaela's Story

Members of the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC) co-developed and co-hosted workshops at the Conference. With this opportunity, Council members worked closely with their education partners to develop engaging content, learning more about how educators work to improve education in this province, and how students can be empowered to be part of that process.

Rami G. and Mikaela G. presented a chaperone session on High School Redesign. Rami was interested in understanding how chaperones viewed their high school experiences, and how things can be improved to make a better experience for students now. Mikaela wanted to see how teachers are implementing certain competencies into the classroom.

In preparation for this session both asked students in their own schools for their thoughts and opinions. Through this feedback, they identified a total of 10 competencies of what students wanted including:

- Their teachers and others who work in schools, to know about them and their interests and talents.
- What they were taught at school to be relevant to their interests.
- The learning and work they did regarded as significant outside of school by experts, and by family and employers.
- Opportunities to apply what they have learned in real world contexts.
- To have a choice as to what they learn, and demonstrate how they are learning.
- To be appropriately challenged through International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement programs and other different sources.
- The opportunity to explore and make mistakes, but not be branded as failures.
- To be able to practice their skills in deep and meaningful ways.
- To have sufficient time to learn at their own pace.
- Time to pursue their learning outside the standard sequence.

During this session, these 10 competencies were used to develop a Mentimeter poll. The chaperones were asked to go through the competencies and vote in relation to their own high school experience. The results of the poll showed 76.8 per cent of chaperones disagree that the competencies were displayed or reflected during their own high school experience. The poll initiated a round table discussion on how things have changed over the years to better support students.

A Mentimeter poll allows you to pose a question to your audience and get instant feedback on that question through cell phones, tablets, and any other internet-connected device.

Implementation Plans

Following the Conference, the *Speak Out* team worked with various program areas within Alberta Education to develop implementation plans based on what was discussed. The voices that were gathered in both the student and chaperone sessions will be shared with education stakeholders to inform their practices and to continue to improve education in the province:

Learning and Technology Policy Framework – New Directions: The feedback gathered from this workshop will be shared with schools, school district leaders and administrators as they move towards implementing the Learning and Technology Policy Framework in their schools.

Creating a "Killer" Option: The student voice gathered from the session highlighted how Career and Technology Foundations (CTF) can be successful in creating different types of options, not just the traditional ones. Students identified that for CTF to be engaging for all involved it is recommended that the teacher have an interest in the topic. Another suggestion included offering courses in the junior high schools that are related to and can be continued in senior high schools for students that are interested in pursuing the subjects further.

Digital Exams: The input shared by students during the session will be used to inform those working to improve the design and delivery of online digital exams.

The *Speak Out* team worked with many program areas within Alberta Education to develop interactive and engaging workshops. Please see the complete Conference What We Heard Reports along with an amazing slide show of the three-day event on the *Speak Out* website at the Conference at www.speakout.alberta.ca/CONFERENCE.

Essay Winner Nimra's Revolution

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world" ~ Mahatma, Gandhi. A leader is a person who has a vision, a drive and a commitment to achieve that vision, and the skills to make it happen.

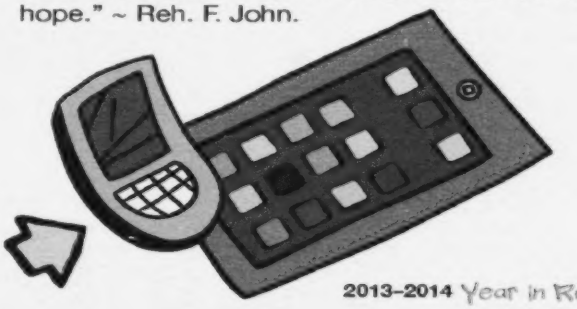
Day after day I would sit alone finishing up the last of my homework in the nearly empty study hall. I, as the committed tutor I am, would wait for a student who would have the courage and time to come up for help. Tutoring during my block 2 spare, I soon realized that my limited schedule of tutoring was unrealistic and conflicted with the schedule of most peers. I love helping people but with my crowded schedule, filled with extracurricular activities during lunch, before and after school only left time during my spare to tutor. I discussed this matter with my friends and found this issue to be quite common amongst them whether they were tutors or someone needing tutoring. I pondered about what I could do.

I soon came across this entrepreneurship program in which I and a few other girls now work hand in hand in developing an app. I was ecstatic upon finding such an amazing opportunity. I quickly gathered a few like-minded students and one of my teachers to help me on this initiative. As a group we came up with the idea of designing a virtual forum in which tutors and peers could communicate during anytime of the day in an anonymous and secure environment. This would solve the issue of tutors and peers having conflicting schedules in which they are unable to meet up. I now lead the group's weekly meetings, monitoring and motivating progress. In contact with a mentor from the University of Alberta and our computer science backgrounds we work together in making this vision truly become a reality.

The app is to be completed by the beginning of May 2015, when it will be launched out to our school as a beta. Students will be able to access the app through their android devices and computers. They will simply log on with their school accounts and be able to communicate and assist their peers on school related topics.

Our intention for the app are to make communication with tutors and peers more easy and accessible to everyone; to overcome the obstacle of conflicting schedules and finding subject specific tutors. One of the many advantages of the app will be assisting in the student's study, as they will be getting help instantly depending on the circumstances. In the near future we hope to bring this app to the market, being available to all schools and their students.

"A leader has a vision. Leaders see a problem that needs to be fixed or a goal that needs to be achieved. It may be something that no one else sees or simply something that no one else wants to tackle. Whatever it is, it is the focus of the leader's attention and they attack it with a single-minded determination. A leader is a dealer in hope." ~ Reh. F. John.



Minister's Student Advisory Council

Alberta Education recognizes that students have a valuable perspective when it comes to their education. *Speak Out* – the Alberta Student Engagement Initiative is committed to supporting students and schools in increasing Alberta youth's engagement in their education and improving student learning experiences, both at the local and provincial levels.

Who They Are

Each of the MSAC members are expected to complete a number of activities, attend meetings and provincial events throughout the year. To learn more about each Council member and what they were up to this past year, check out the *Speak Out* website at www.speakout.alberta.ca/COUNCIL. The 2013 - 2014 MSAC include:

Name	Grade	Town
Aaron S.	12	Brooks
Allyson S.	11	Peace River
Andrew M.	10	Calgary
Ankita S.	12	Calgary
Arnie E.	12	Sherwood Park
Breanne M.	11	Airdrie
Elanta A.	12	Cochrane
John S.	12	Athabasca
Kaitlynn D.	10	Wembley
Laura S.	10	Daysland
Lily Z.	10	Edmonton
Mallaz N.	12	Fort McMurray
Maria B.	12	Edmonton
Matthys S.	12	Calgary
McKinna E.	12	Olds
Mikaela G.	10	Calgary
Nicole M.	10	Calgary
Rami G.	11	Calgary
Rebecca G.	12	Vegreville
Rohan N.	12	Edmonton
Ryan P.	9	Pincher Creek
Sharad G.	10	Calgary
Suzie S.	11	Rocky Mountain House
Taylor P.	12	Coaldale
Thomas P.	12	Beaumont

About MSAC

Through the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC), students get involved in decision making, connect with other students, grow as leaders and become the student voice in their community. As ambassadors of student voice, students share their perspective collaboratively alongside all education partners, including teachers, principals, superintendents and government staff, to enhance the education system.

The MSAC consists of 24 to 30 youth between the ages of 14 and 19 years old from all regions of Alberta. Council members are selected based on a diversity of backgrounds, opinions, experiences and perspectives described in their written application, as well as their responses given in a telephone interview. Alberta Education reviews the short list of candidates, and the Minister of Education selects the members.

Council members serve a one year term beginning in July of each year, to a maximum of two years. The application process is annual and all interested youth must submit an application including those Council members seeking renewal. As part of their term, Council members meet in Edmonton three times a year for training and provide their student voice to inform initiatives and policies within Alberta Education. They also meet with Alberta Education and the educational community throughout the year.

MSAC Activities

The focus for the MSAC this year was providing members with more opportunities to develop their leadership skills, increase their capacity to gather the student voice and act as ambassadors for that voice; represent *Speak Out* and the student perspective at various events; and participate as partners in evaluating and re-envisioning the *Speak Out* initiative itself.

The MSAC were asked to stretch themselves as leaders this year. The *Speak Out* team gave the Council additional responsibility specific to the planning and delivering of the Annual *Speak Out* Conference. The Council was not only asked to work with Alberta Education partners on the Conference sessions, and act as Conference hosts, but also to take on the planning and leading of the Student Engagement Olympics on the Saturday night, and the Inspiring Leaders of Change session on the Sunday morning. MSAC members formed sub-committees, volunteered to be the hosts of the sessions and worked with the *Speak Out* team, Alberta Education staff and partner organizations for months leading up to the Conference. Council members were able to showcase their skills in public speaking, planning, networking, creativity and ability to think on their feet throughout the entire weekend.

In addition to the Annual *Speak Out* Conference, Council members were given other opportunities to fine-tune their leadership skills throughout the year. They participated in a number of events to represent the student perspective and bring their insights to the conversation, including the Chinese Bridge Summer Camp for Canadian Secondary School Students, the Youth Engagement Think Tank, Bullying Prevention Luncheon, Task Force for Teaching Excellence Symposium, the Deputy Minister's Dialogue, and the *Inspiring Education* Symposium. MSAC members also wrote and delivered welcoming remarks at the *Inspiring Education* Symposium during the Alberta School Boards Association spring conference, and developed and hosted a session for students at the Safe and Caring Schools Conference.

Speak Out looked to the MSAC more than ever this year to express their views and give feedback on the initiative itself. *Speak Out* spent much of 2013 - 2014 re-envisioning what student engagement and student voice in Alberta could look like, and dreaming in partnership with the MSAC to create a new vision for the future. Their voices, opinions and ideas are reflected in the path we are moving towards in the coming years.

Their Meetings

At the initial MSAC meeting in September, Council members were joined by Maureen Kubinec, MLA, Fort Saskatchewan-Vegreville when they met with the Deputy Minister of Education, who shared with them the priorities for education in Alberta. They participated in an orientation to government and the education system, media and blog training, facilitation training, participated in a *Speak Out* forum, and attended special workshops on the Education Act Regulatory Review, High School Credentialing, and the Task Force for Teaching Excellence. MSAC members also worked together in several team building exercises, helping to build their network and relationships within the Council.

In January, in addition to participating in an in-depth Annual Conference planning session with Alberta Education staff and partners, Council members participated in sessions on Networking 101, leadership, and blog training. The MSAC perspectives and voice were sought out in discussions on student engagement, which was led by a Council member, and on re-envisioning by the Speak Out team. MSAC met with Minister Jeff Johnson and Deputy Minister Greg Bass where they participated in an informal discussion about education and the student perspective. Council members continued to build their network, creatively work together and participate in team building activities throughout the weekend.

The final meeting took place in May. Council members had the opportunity to attend sessions on the Task Force for Teaching Excellence, Assessment Capacity, and the Provincial Approach to Student Information (PASI) Program. The MSAC received additional leadership training and were also given a tour of the Alberta Legislature. Council members presented the student voice to Assistant Deputy Minister Gene Williams, where they shared some of their experiences of the past few months. Some of the topics included what makes an excellent teacher; reports on the student voice gathered in their *Speak Out* Conference sessions; the work they are doing at their schools, to engage others and live the vision of *Inspiring Education*; and the projects they created to take action, on the data gathered at their *Speak Out* forums earlier in the year. MSAC members also spent some time reflecting on their growth throughout the year, providing feedback to the *Speak Out* team; talking about where they were headed next; and how the skills they have gained this year can be put to use.

"One of the most amazing experiences I have ever had. It was benefited me in a very positive way. I now know that there is a lot that goes into the education system and maintaining it and planning things and it involves a huge scale of people. I was clueless before." - **MSAC Member**

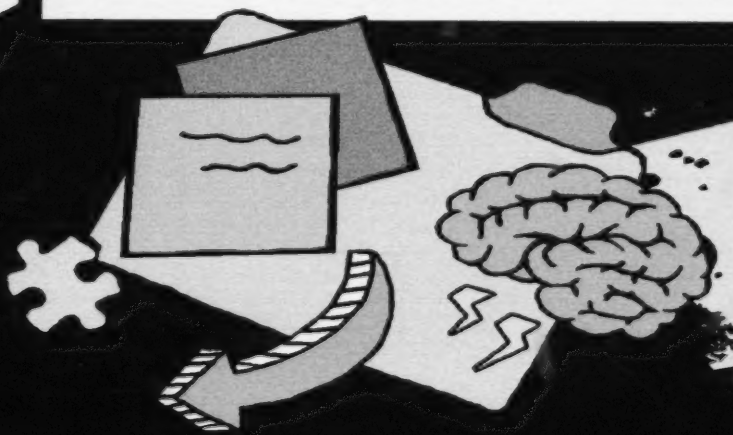
Their Impact

The MSAC was given the opportunity to provide student feedback on many programs within Alberta Education including the Provincial Approach to Student Information initiative, which involves moving exam results online. Council input is evident in plans for the program, which will be launched in 2015. The MSAC added their voices to hundreds of other Alberta students in the survey for the Task Force for Teaching Excellence. Their voices are reflected in the recommendations made by the Task Force, which was released in May 2014. The Council was also able to make a further impact by providing feedback to the Assessment Capacity team in a video they developed.

At the provincial level, the MSAC directly contributed to a proposal for the re-envisioning of the *Speak Out* initiative. They suggested changes that will affect the development of each component of *Speak Out* including the website design, forum structure, the Annual Conference and even the Council. They have asked for a more streamlined, clean, mature look to the initiative, with flexibility to contribute to student voice in new ways and through new mediums.

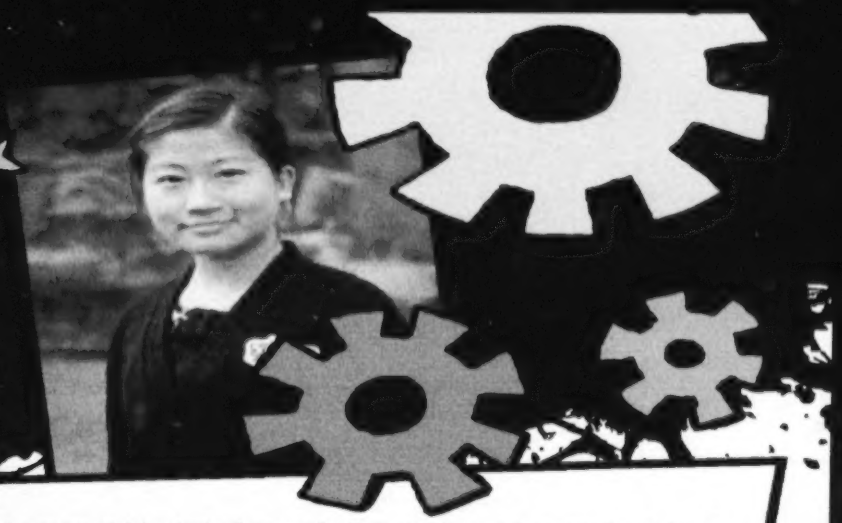
The Council's impact has been more direct at a school and district level. Each member worked with their school to deliver a *Speak Out* Forum and then discussed the results of those Forums with their school administration. Several MSAC members were able to present their Forum results to their Parent Councils, their Superintendent, and were working with them on action plans on how to improve student engagement in their school communities.

At every opportunity the Council embraced their roles as ambassadors of student voice, became leaders of change and talked with their peers about what student engagement means to them—what's working, what's not and what students want to do about it.



"Thank you for this chance. It really has been one heck of a year. Entering into high school there were some struggles, but there was some successes. It has helped me grow some confidence – I didn't realize how important the student voice is in Alberta Education." - **MSAC Member**

Lily's Story



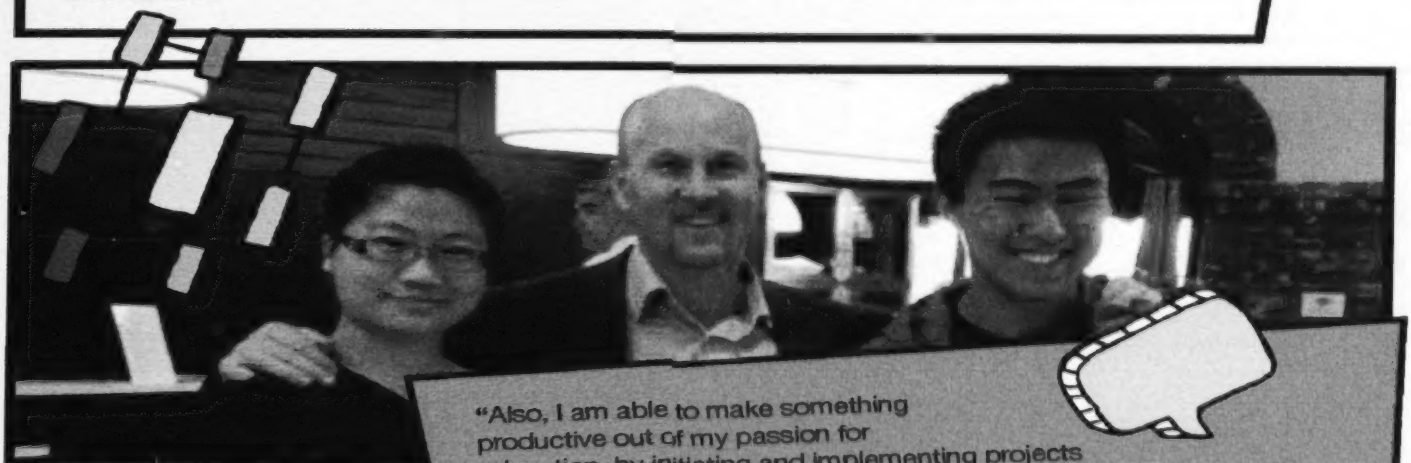
We were born to need certain things. Those things could include food, shelter, water, and essentially love. As the human population flourishes at an unimaginable rate, we begin to see acceptance as a necessity. We desire to belong, to find an exclusive place among oceans of rooftops and skyscrapers where our voices are worth more than noises that reverberate in our heads. In those exclusive places, we can passionately embrace what makes each and every one of us special.

I have a story to tell, and it's about an exclusive place not too far from here. To start, I really like school, and it's sometimes weird to admit. I enjoy it because of the challenges and people that shape me and my experiences. I'm presented with opportunities to sharpen the saw and meet inspiring figures who have admirable stories to tell. I always wanted to improve my educational experiences and spread the passion, but it's hard to be optimistic among peers who think otherwise.

In pursuit of what I thought was a strange passion, I attended the 5th Annual *Speak Out* Conference. I was quite shocked by the magnitude of it, to be honest. I never thought there could be a place for young education enthusiasts! No surprise, I applied for the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC) like a Harry Potter fan would for Pottermore.

Fast forward, I'm now a MSAC member and I wear my swag sweater with pride. *Speak Out* is that exclusive place where I can talk about education and feel ultimately great. I get to meet students who share similar perspectives, but each has a specialty that I can learn from. Also, I am able to make something productive out of my passion for education, by initiating and implementing projects such as forums or the annual conference. Lastly, it's the different opportunities I receive that are truly spectacular and eye-opening. For example, I recently participated in the Alberta Education Deputy Minister's Dialogue, at the *Inspiring Education* Symposium, and the enthusiasm and dedication in the room really stirred my spirits. I felt so grateful to be in Alberta, and to be part of *Speak Out*.

I know my confession of love isn't quite a blockbuster, but it's just a place that makes me happy. I hope as I continue my education, *Speak Out* will always be a part of my experience as a student.



"Also, I am able to make something productive out of my passion for education, by initiating and implementing projects such as forums or the annual conference." - Lily, MSAC

Inspiring Education
The Student's Perspective

Now, more than ever, student input can make a difference. Two students from the Minister's Student Advisory Council brought their student voice to the *Inspiring Education* Symposium held in Red Deer on June 4, 2014. The *Inspiring Education* Working Team invited Lily Z. and Andrew M. to be interviewed and share with the symposium delegates what *Inspiring Education* means to students, how they can see it in their schools and communities, and what role students can play in order to help achieve this vision.

According to Andrew and Lily, the vision of *Inspiring Education* has led to a shift in how students are taught and how learning is measured in their schools. Andrew identified that students are provided with more opportunities to engage with the course material in a variety of ways and directly relate how the learning can be applied in real life. Lily indicated that instead of regurgitating the 'what', they are encouraged to reflect deeply upon the 'why' and the 'how'. Both also acknowledged that the shifts in how they are taught and encouraged to think, has led them to feel better prepared for the wide range of competencies required for today and tomorrow.

Although Lily and Andrew have gained a deep appreciation of *Inspiring Education*, Lily noted that even though the term '*Inspiring Education*' may not exactly be on student's radar or within student's vocabulary, students do know when things are happening – students can see the changes.

The students proposed a call to action to the school board trustees in attendance at the symposium. They identified that in order to create the student-centered learning envisioned in *Inspiring Education*, students must be actively and regularly included in the discussions. School authorities must demonstrate what they mean by students first. Students should be invited to meetings, encouraged to speak and participate in events. Lily and Andrew suggested that even though students are still teenagers with "bizarre interests and naïve pursuits" – students are a crucial part of the conversation.

The students were scheduled to address the trustees for 30 minutes; however, the response from the trustees was so positive, that the session was extended to allow for additional questions. Lily and Andrew stayed throughout the day, and many trustees took the opportunity to engage with the students in one-on-one conversations. Final evaluations from the symposium clearly indicated that the two student sessions (one at the beginning of the day and a closing session) were truly the "star attractions" for the day.

Heather's Story

How has *Speak Out* impacted my life? Honestly, it would be easier to list the facets of my life that *Speak Out* hasn't impacted. If you were to compare the person that I was before I joined the Minister's Student Advisory Council (MSAC) in 2011 to who I am today, you'd find a total stranger—a shy, nervous little person who could barely give a presentation to a crowd of 20 people, much less a conference of over 300! But *Speak Out* is all about enacting change—change in the education system, change in schools, change in communities, and change in individuals, and it is thanks to them that I am the person that I am today.

Speak Out opened doors for me that I didn't even realize existed—which was huge for me, having grown up in a small, remote community. I had the opportunity to participate in so many projects through the initiative, from the Inspiring Education roundtable discussions in 2011 to co-hosting the 5th Annual *Speak Out* Conference with fellow MSAC members in 2013, and through those projects I came to realize that my voice and thoughts did matter.

As an adolescent you hear far too often that you're "just a kid" and that you'll "understand when you're older"—*Speak Out* never made me feel that way. They valued my perspective as a teenager, and made sure that I felt that my voice was heard, which gave me more confidence in myself than ever before. No longer do I bite my tongue or hold my breath when I want to say something about an issue that's important to me—I speak out!

That's why I feel that *Speak Out* is such a valuable part of our education system—it gives students a place to make themselves heard, and shows that people are ready to listen to their ideas. It makes sense—after all, the benefactors of our education system are students, so why shouldn't they have a say in it? But too many kids feel that their education is something that just "happens" to them, and not something that they can have a voice in. *Speak Out* proves that that isn't so.

In fact, my work with *Speak Out* inspired me to continue on in working with students in the education system, and I am now pursuing my B.Ed Secondary at the University of Alberta (where my activities with *Speak Out* helped me snag a leadership scholarship worth $3,500—not bad at all!) My hope is that I can pass on my passion for student engagement to my future students, and let them know that there are people out there who value their perspectives, and want their feedback in their education—that their voices matter.

Speak Out isn't just a footnote on my resume—it's a huge part of my life, and something that I'll always be passionate about. I've made lasting friendships, incredible memories, and learned so many things in my role as an ambassador for the *Speak Out* initiative, and though my time on the Council has sadly come to pass, my passion for student engagement never will, and that's something that I owe to the *Speak Out* initiative.

"That's why I feel that *Speak Out* is such a valuable part of our education system—it gives students a place to make themselves heard, and shows that people are ready to listen to their ideas."- **Heather, MSAC**

Speak Out Year in Review

Acknowledgments

Speak Out would like to acknowledge the continual support of the Government of Alberta. Making the student voice a priority in Alberta Education enables *Speak Out* to continue to be one of the leading student engagement opportunities for students in Canada.

A huge thank you also needs to be sent to all of our education and community partners. Their efforts have inspired incredible discussions among our students, broaden their perspectives, deepen their understanding of the education system, and helped to facilitate their development in becoming leaders of change.

Alberta Education

- Assessment Standards
- Career and Technology Foundations
- Citizenship and Career Pathways
- Curriculum Standards and Stakeholder Engagement
- Digital Systems and Services
- French Language Services and International Education
- Human Resources
- Literacy, Numeracy and Competencies
- Mathematics, Arts and Communication
- Metro Services
- Provincial Approach to Student Information
- Planning and Standards
- School and Community Supports for Children and Youth
- School Technology
- Teaching Excellence
- Workforce Planning and Development

Alberta Mentoring Partnerships

Alberta School Board Association

Alberta School Councils Association

Camp fYrefly

Canadian Association of School System Administrators

Canadian Education Association

College of Alberta School Superintendents

Elections Alberta

Innovation and Advanced Education

Legislative Assembly of Alberta

MacEwan University

Regulatory Review Committee

Society for Safe and Caring Schools & Communities

SUNIA

The Canadian Safe School Network

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- Bob Cardinal
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- MLA Matt Jeneroux, Chair of the Youth Secretariat
- Shauna Paul
- Tara Copeman

Most importantly, *Speak Out* would like to thank the students of Alberta. Thank you for continuing to *Speak Out* about your education. You continue to amaze the *Speak Out* team with your insight, creativity, and desire to make education better in Alberta.

Year In Review
2013/2014
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